

4-27-1981

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Recommended Citation

"Brother George F. Kohles, S.M." (1981). *News Releases*. 6793.
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The University of Dayton

News Release

BROTHER GEORGE F. KOHLES, S.M.

DAYTON, Ohio, April 27, 1981 -- A veteran of 60 years of teaching and writing and one of the University of Dayton's most colorful persons, Brother George F. Kohles, S.M. died Sunday, April 26. He was 83.

Brother George retired from his teaching position in the Department of English in 1968, after 33 years, but remained active on the campus and in his religious community. He continued to discover new outlets for his 65-year ministry as a Marianist brother, even in his eighties. Last summer he traveled to New York to volunteer his time as a summer staffer at two nursing homes. Besides learning a lot about chronic physical illness and geriatric nursing, Brother George was the official dispenser of TLC, led the aged and infirmed in prayer, and regularly belted out "favorite airs" in English, Irish, Italian and Spanish with piano accompaniment.

During the same summer he completed a 36,000-word history of St. John's Home, a home for underprivileged and delinquent youth at Rockaway Park, NY. His book is entitled Brooklyn's Monument to Child Care -- St. John's of Rockaway Beach.

Such "retirement" reflects the active life he led as a teacher. A 1922 graduate of the University of Dayton, Kohles completed a Master of Arts degree in English at Catholic University of America in 1932. At the collegiate level he taught Speech, English, and Spanish at the University of Dayton, Trinity College in Sioux City, Iowa, and Catholic University of Puerto Rico. He also taught journalism at UD and was moderator of the University of Dayton News for 20 years.

In addition to his college teaching career he served on the faculties of high schools in Detroit, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Cleveland.

Brother George authored "Journalistic Training" in 1940 and "The Natural Public Speaker" in 1941. He published numerous essays including one on Dayton poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, printed in The Catholic Educator in 1954.

One of Brother George's most cherished "clippings" was a 1936 Dayton Daily News feature in which he wrote a futuristic piece about the University of Dayton in 1976. His predictions of the school's growth were remarkably accurate, including his claim that UD would enroll more than 10,000 students. When he wrote his predictions, UD enrolled fewer than 500 students.

An avid sports fan, Brother George maintained a special fondness for the baseball Orioles of his native Baltimore. In the winter months he boarded the student buses to the UD Arena to follow UD Flyer basketball.

He had a flair for writing and in recent years his florid style often appeared in letters to the editors of local newspapers.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, April 29, at 7:30 p.m. in the Immaculate Conception Chapel on the University of Dayton campus. Visitation will be in the chapel from 4 to 7 p.m. Burial will be at Queen of Heaven Cemetery at Bergamo on Thursday at 10 a.m.

Brother Kohles is survived by two brothers, John and Joseph, of Baltimore, Maryland.